



Bird Chatterings



Issue 4 Volume 6
April 2004

The Newsletter of the North Shore Cage Bird Club

Meetings at the Sunnynook Community Centre,
148 Sycamore Drive, Sunnynook.
8pm, 4th Thursday of each month excluding
December.

Our Annual Show

to be held on 1 & 2 May 2004
Sunnynook Intermediate School

The Committee has met and preparations are
underway. Please give donations for prizes
and most importantly - raffles.

We need volunteers to make this a success,
so if you can spare the time and effort we
can make this a good show.

There's an idea to hold a bird display and
sale at the Glenfield Hall, 1st weekend in
April. Mmm.. that one didn't fly so we're
keeping it for a later date.

**Recycle and Scrap Metal - Please give to
Jim Ziarno who is kindly collecting for club
funds**

This newsletter is proudly supported by
AA Tourism

<http://www.aatravel.co.nz>



Blue Faced Parrot Finch

This newsletter, past issues, membership forms,
and other resources and information are on the
web at:

<http://cagebirds.arecool.net>

or

www24.brinkster.com/marknissen/NSCBC

Who's Who!

Patron: Jim Middleton
Vice Patron: Bill McAlees

President: Jim Ziarno, 18 Stanley St, Glenfield,
Auckland. Ph 444 3024.

Vice President: Ron McIlwain Ph 483 8351.

Treasurer: Mark Nissen Ph 482 3471.

Secretary: David Burn Ph. 476 3505.

Editor: Mark Nissen Ph 482 3471.

Committee: Bill Bates, Colin Punter, Kate Nicholas,
Robyn Clark, Jim Ziarno, Luke Staal, Gordon McGibbon.

Show Manager: Maurice Donell.
Assistant Show Managers: Gordon McGibbon,
Paul Hughes. Ph 415 9106.

Show Secretary: Colin Punter.
Assistant Show Secretary: Kate Nicholas.

Trophy Custodian: Jim Middleton.

North Shore Cage Bird Club Membership Subscription/Renewal

Due annually from date of A.G.M.

Surname First Name/s

Surname First Name/s

Street Suburb

Town Postal Code

Phone D.O.B. if < 16 yrs

Status: Champion/Novice/Junior Parent Club: Yes/No

Interests (circle those that apply): Budgerigars, Yorkshire Canaries, Gloster Canaries, Norwich Canaries,
Border Canaries, Roller Canaries, Parrots, Lovebirds, Finches, Bengalese, Zebra Finches, Foreign Birds, Doves,
Colour Canaries, Quail, British Birds, Other (please note)

Subscription: Single Adult \$20.00 : Partnership: \$25.00 : Junior: \$5.00 : Junior Partnership \$10.00 :
Pensioner: \$12.00 : Pensioner Partnership: \$15.00 : Late renewal: add 10% after 1 November.

Total \$..... Date...../...../.....

Note: Please send before 31 October in order to be included in The New Zealand Federation Of Cage Bird Clubs Inc
Year Book.

Send with remittance to either: 38 Salamanca Rd, Sunnynook, Auckland
or: 47 Lysander Crescent, Beach Haven, Auckland

Please feel free to photocopy this, or a PDF file is available at the website <http://CageBirds.areCool.net>

Beaconclore

Seed Suppliers. 490 Don Buck Road, Massey, Auckland 8.
Ph 09 833 6179

We are merchants for Top Flight Seed.
These seeds are NZ grown where possible.

Hours: 9 am – 4 pm Saturday and Sunday
For Prices and Enquiries Please Phone 09 833 6179

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Minutes from Monthly Meeting March 04

Attendance; 10 Apologies; Robyn Clarke; John Ellis; Mark Thompson; Moved. Bill Bates ; Brett Alexander

Minutes, as read in News Letter - Moved. Paul Hughes; Carol Ziarno.

Mail In 1. Federation Minutes
 2. 2004 Patronage
 3. Taraunga Bird Sale
 4. Correspondence from T Humphries

Mail Out Nil
Moved. Gordon McGibbon; Bill Bates

Finance; Savings account. \$ 4253.01
 Cheque \$ 480.11
 Petty Cash \$ 27.30
Moved. Carol Ziarno; Gordon McGibbon

General Business.

1. Top Flight Seed Supplies, now available from Jim Ziarno Tel 09 4443024
2. Possible club bird sale early April to be held in the Glenfeild Hall.
Jim Z to confirm.
3. Suggestion of awarding club diplomas for breeders reaching Champion status or achieving a high standard on the show bench.
4. We have been approached to organise a display of cage birds at the Grand Easter Show . This will involve the building of an aviary (paid for by the sponsors) Volunteers needed.
5. Fee and bond to be paid to Wiarau Intermediate school before 08.04.04 .
6. Confirm accommodation for annual show Judges.
7. Send remit as per Feb news letter to Federation.

Meeting closed 9:10 pm

Market Place

Bird Equipment:

Maurice Donnell has a variety of excess bird equipment of all kinds suitable for Canaries and Finches. Young bird keepers will get a very good deal. Ph 410 4140

Budgerigar Show

Cages: unpainted boxes with hinges etc available from

Colin Punter. Ph 837 1091

Millet Spray:

Masterpet have a special on \$60 for a 15Kg box + \$5 freight and handling.

While stock lasts.

Ph 0800 738 546.

Cheques to P.O.Box 39 191, Wellington Mail Centre.

Wanted: Corona Gloster Hen Canary, please phone Murray on 410 3244.



Red Shining Parrot

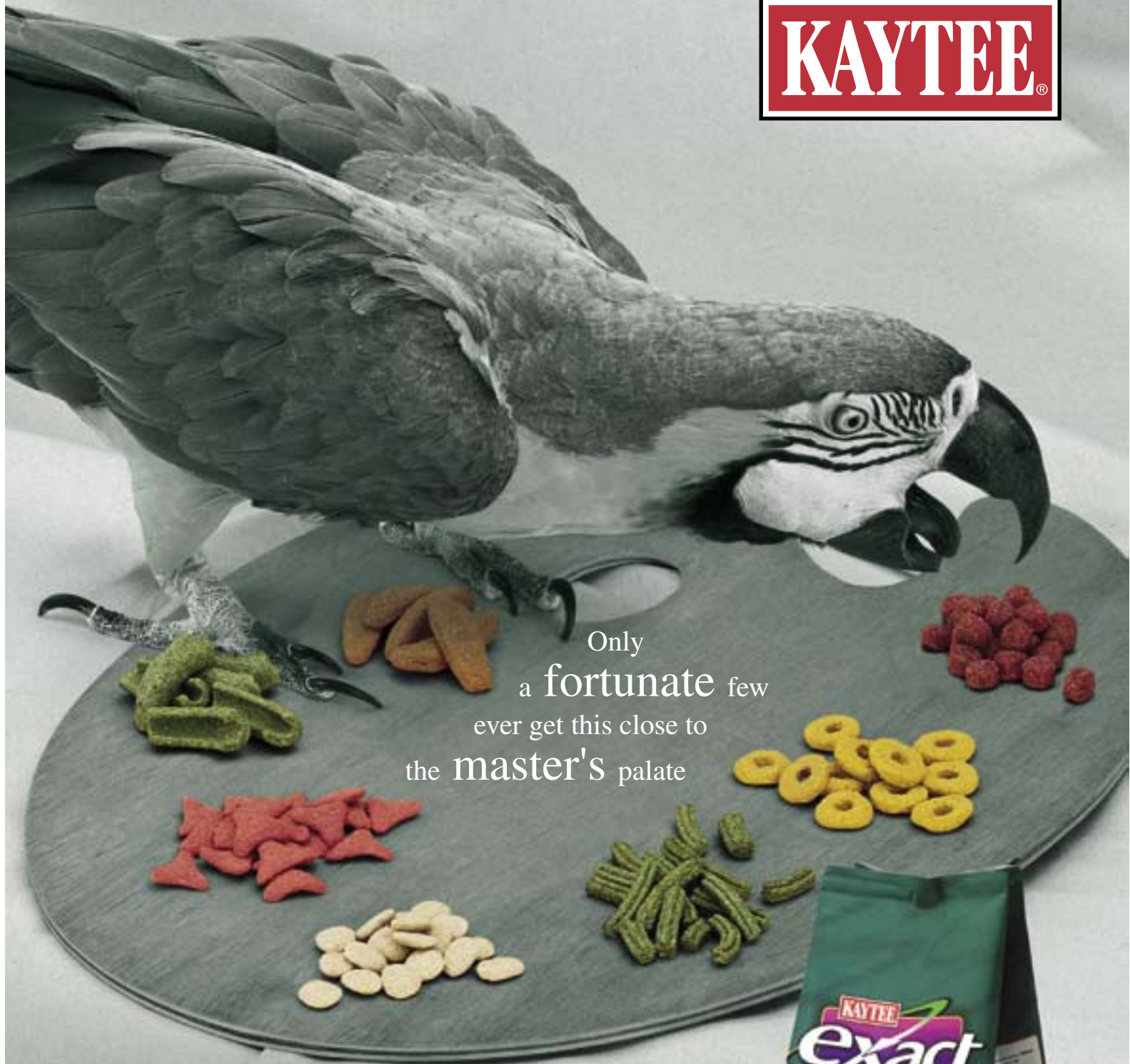
Next meeting
To be held in the
Sunny Nook
Community Centre

148 Sycamore Drive,
Sunnynook.

On the 22.04.04 (4th
Thursday of each month
excl December)



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 a fortunate few
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05'04

Shows, Sales, Events

South Auckland cage Bird Club Auction, Franklin A&P Showgrounds, Pukekohe
Sunday 18 April, Benching 7:30 to 10:00 pm. A great variety of birds
Phone Ian on 09 235 0081

Manawatu Avicultural Society, Annual Bird Sale, Fielding Civic Centre, Sunday 18 April,
8:30 to 1:00 pm., New Zealand's biggest bird sale, Phone Ian on 06 323 5301

Tauranga Bird Sale, Matua Hall, Levers Rd, Tauranga. 24 April.
Contact Gwen Wilkinson 07 576 3860

NZ Finch Breeders Bird Fair, Ellerslie War Memorial Hall, Hook Beaks allowed this year
Sunday 9 May, 9 - 12.

Shows, May 2004

1st & 2nd Hutt Valley, North Shore, Upper Hutt
8th & 9th Tauranga, Ashburton
15th & 16th Rotorua, Stratford, Nelson
22nd & 23rd Palmerston North, South Auckland, North Otago
29th & 30th Wairarapa, Huntly

June 2004

5th & 6th Hastings, Hawkes Bay, Northland
12th & 13th Piako, Wellington Porirua, Christchurch
19th & 20th Hawera, Auckland Metro, Marlborough
26th & 27th North Taranaki, Whakatane, Dunedin

July 2004

3rd & 4th Te Awamutu Hamilton Tokoroa
10th & 11th Levin, Poverty Bay, Timaru

72nd Grand National Show
30th & 31st July & 1st August Invercargill

Notices

Budgies

Ron Mcilwain is disposing of a number of budgies

Call on 09 483 8351

Jim Ziarno is now the "Seed Guy" next orders will be taken at the annual show.

Dilpomas for Novices moving to Champion and equivalent in fancies that don't have said system were proposed and passed by popular proclamation. Once printed these will be awarded to those deserving individuals in a Ceremonial Manner at Annual Show, AGM of other significant meeting.



Chaffinch



Diamond Sparrow

**Kaytee© exact© Hand Feeding Formula - bulk size
is now available at a discounted price at the following retail outlets:**

**Jansens -Auckland, Bird Barn - Auckland, Lady Gay's - Auckland,
Drury Discount Pet Centre - Auckland, Pet City - Hamilton, Animates - Lower Hutt, Wellington,
Christchurch,
Hutt Pet - Lower Hutt, Paws & Claws - Upper Hutt, Animalz - Wellington, Napier, Havelock North,
Pet World - Kapiti Coast, Mokoia Market - Hawera, Roseland Garden Centre - Blenheim,
Nelson City Pet Store, Nelson, Papanui Pets - Christchurch, Feather & Fur - Christchurch,
Animal Supplies - Ashburton, Little Critters - Timaru, The Pet Warehouse - Dunedin,
East Road Pets - Invercargill**

Important

ANNUAL SHOW!

Please plan to bring food for the kitchen, and biscuits and cakes etc for the Friday Night. The more the merrier.

Donations for the raffle, good stuff, tat, unwanted gifts, anything you can get out of the house unnoticed - we need more!

If you want to sell some birds at the show - bring them in (see Mark Nissen) there'll be a sales table.

Pied Budgerigar Society Web Site

<http://PiedBudgies.areCool.net> **OR**
www.24.brinkster.com/marknissen/PBS

For any one who wishes to enter birds into the Northland Show on the 5th and 6th of June, Jim Ziarno and Colin Punter have kindly offered to take entries in their Vans/trailer.



Magpie Mannikin

MASSEY PETS & AQUARIUM CENTRE Marjorie and Dennis.

406 DON BUCK ROAD, MASSEY, AUCKLAND. PH 09 833 5577.

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On the Health of Budgerigars and Cockatiels from <http://www.exoticpetvet.net/avian/budgietiel.html>

Medical Conditions and Diseases of the Budgerigar and Cockatiel

Budgerigar: *Melopsittacus undulatus* Cockatiel: *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Budgies and cockatiels are the most common pet birds seen in practice. It is important to understand the most commonly encountered diseases and conditions of these popular little birds, in order to be able to properly diagnose and treat them. When dealing with the owners of budgies and cockatiels, do not underestimate their attachment to these little birds. Offer them the same diagnostics and level of care that you would the owner of a macaw or Amazon parrot. To many budgie and 'tiel owners, their birds are true members of the family and they are willing to have any necessary diagnostics performed, and have any required treatments administered. Do not compromise the quality of care offered to the smaller birds.

The budgerigar, *Melopsittacus undulatus*, is a fascinating little psittacine with well-deserved popularity due to its small size and big personality. The budgie is the best known of all parrots, and has found its way to virtually every country in the world. It may be considered a domesticated parrot, as it has bred prolifically in captivity since the mid 1800s. While sexual maturity usually occurs at approximately six months of age, researchers have shown that young male budgies may produce spermatozoa within 60 days of leaving the nest. This rapid sexual development is a physiological adaptation to an arid environment and enables very young birds to reproduce quickly when conditions are propitious.

Most parrots are taken out of the nest as babies to be hand fed to make them more tame, however, budgies are usually left with the parents until after they are fledged. Baby budgies tame down very quickly and make devoted, wonderful companions.

Budgie Statistics

Budgies are about seven inches in length and weigh between 26-30 grams. English budgies are slightly larger and weigh proportionally more. The average life span is between six and ten years, and the maximum recorded life span is 18 years. Budgerigars are native to Australia, and tend to live in large flocks, although they may also be found in small parties. In their native habitat, they feed on seeds procured on or near the ground, and the important food items are seeds of native grasses. Crop contents studied included grass seeds and a few seeds of *Portulaca oleracea*. Budgies have been described as extremely nomadic in Australia and they can be found inhabiting timber bordering watercourses, sparsely timbered grasslands, dry scrublands and open plains. It is very important to note that wild budgies are very active birds, flying great distances to visit waterholes and seeding grasses. They fly from tree to tree and scurry through the grass searching for seeds. Many problems with captive budgies can be directly attributed to the sedentary lifestyle of the pet caged budgie, when its activity level is compared to that of a wild budgie.

Male budgies can be excellent mimics and can develop huge vocabularies. Hens may whistle and can learn a few words, but they are not nearly as loquacious as males. Budgies are dimorphic. Adult males of most colors, except albino and the very pale pastels, develop a blue cere. Hens have a lilac or tan cere that turns brownish upon maturity.

Cockatiel Statistics

Cockatiels are usually taken from the nest when they are two to three weeks of age for hand-feeding. Any of the commercially available hand-feeding formulas are fine to use. Cockatiels are usually 12.5 inches in length, and weight between 75-125 grams. Larger boned show cockatiels may weigh 10-15 grams more. Feel the pectoral muscles, if they bulge away from the center keel bone, then the bird is probably overweight. Sexual maturity may occur as early as six months of age, and up to 12 months. The recorded maximum life span is 32 years, but on the average, a cockatiel will live for 15-20 years in captivity, given proper conditions.

Cockatiels are dimorphic once they have molted out the baby feathers. This molt usually occurs at about six months of age. Adult grey males have bright yellow facial feathers and bright orange cheek patches. Adult grey hens have dull facial feathers. With the color mutations, adult males have solid primary remiges and retrices. Hens will have yellow dots on the remiges, stripes of yellow on the retrices. These marks are subtle. Males are great mimics, and can whistle tunes and talk very well. Hens will vocalize, and can whistle a bit, but most won't talk.

Nutritional Disorders

Budgies and cockatiels consume a primarily seed diet in the wild, and they do seem to thrive on a seed-based diet. However, pellets, sprouted seeds, fresh fruits, vegetables, pasta, whole wheat bread and healthy table foods are sound additions to the budgie diet. A budgie that eats just seeds should have access to a cuttlebone or mineral block, and should receive supplemental vitamins (but NOT in the drinking water) as directed by your avian veterinarian. Some budgies and cockatiels are extremely resistant to dietary changes.

It should be noted that it can be dangerous to try and convert any bird to a different diet without first ascertaining that it is healthy. Dietary conversion in a sub-clinically ill bird can precipitate a health crisis. Always evaluate a bird's health before attempting to change a budgie's or cockatiel's diet to make sure that is healthy enough to withstand the stress of changing the diet.

Budgies, and to a lesser extent, cockatiels, are very prone to obesity and the problems related to being overweight. The obese budgie or cockatiel may develop lipomas, which are benign (non-malignant) fatty tumors. These may be found over the crop area, the chest or the abdomen, most commonly. In other cases, the bird may develop generalized lipomatosis, which is a layer of fat over the entire surface of the body under the skin. Xanthomas, yellow fatty tumors, may also occur. Surgery may be necessary, especially if the skin over the tumor ulcerates, but often, the tumor will recur, unless changes are made in the diet and activity level.

Obese birds usually have some degree of liver problems. When fat is deposited in the liver, normal liver cells are replaced with fat and over time, if enough normal liver tissue is destroyed, it can no longer function properly. Birds with fatty liver syndrome (also called hepatic lipidosis) will suffer from some degree of liver dysfunction and may bleed excessively, as the liver is responsible for providing clotting factors in the blood. Hepatic lipidosis is very serious and can be fatal. Prolonged liver damage may result in the liver becoming fibrotic eventually, leading to cirrhosis of the liver. Hepatic lipidosis can have multiple causes, and may have a genetic predisposition. Birds on an all-seed diet with restricted exercise are prime candidates for hepatic lipidosis. Thyroid dysfunction may result in obesity. Toxins such as aflatoxins can result in fatty changes in the liver. Steroid administration (from topical ointments or hormone injections with methylprogesterone, for example) can cause a bird to gain excessive weight.

Budgies and cockatiels with liver disease may have overgrown toenails and beaks. The best indicator for liver disease in birds is the bile acids blood test. To definitively diagnose liver disease, a liver biopsy should be performed. However, in many cases, a bird with advanced liver disease cannot withstand the stress of a surgical procedure and may have problems with the blood not clotting, so surgery may not be recommended or possible.

While I do not condone allowing any pet bird free-flight in the home due to the risk of injury or escape, it must be remembered that budgies and cockatiels are naturally very busy birds, so the largest cage that is practical should be purchased. They should have toys, swings, ladders and playgyms, and owners should encourage their birds to play and exercise frequently to prevent obesity.

Obese birds, and those with lipomas, should be offered a diet lower in fat. Each case should be discussed individually with your avian veterinarian. As guidelines, I usually recommend decreasing regular seed mix and increasing millet, since millet is lower in fat than the other seeds. Sprouted seed is healthier, and should be offered daily. I also recommend offering pasta and whole wheat bread, plenty of fresh veggies and fruit, and some table foods (without butter, margarine or other added fats). Increasing the activity level of obese birds should be undertaken.

It should be noted that feeding greens, fruit and vegetables does NOT cause diarrhea, as is often quoted in budgie books. Consuming foods with more water in them will cause increased urination, and not diarrhea. Feeding vegetables and some fruits is recommended and bird owners should not be put off by printed misinformation that discourages them from feeding those healthy foods.

Iodine deficiency in the diet may result in thyroid dysplasia in budgies, although this is not as common as it used to be. This occurs in birds that consume an all-seed diet that is deficient in iodine. Birds with thyroid dysplasia present with respiratory signs from the enlarged thyroid glands pressing on the trachea and syrinx. Some develop a characteristic squeak when they breathe. This is treated by prescribing an iodine supplement. Injectable iodine: 20% sodium iodine in saline for injection, 0.01 ml/budgie once, IM. Oral: Make stock solution of 2 ml Lugol's iodine in 30 ml water. Mix one drop of stock solution in 250 ml drinking water. Use daily for treatment, 2-3 times per week for prevention.

Cockatiels should probably not receive a 100% pelleted diet. Cockatiels that have been on a pelleted diet for years have developed renal disease. For this reason, I recommend not feeding more than 50% pellets, some seed, and a good portion of the diet should be table foods, fruits, veggies, pasta, whole wheat bread, and other nutritious items. Avocado, chocolate and onions should not be fed, due to potential toxicosis problems.

Budgies with a crusty cere, feet and vent are usually infested with the Knemidokoptes mite. Most budgies with this condition are young (usually less than one year of age). These mites do not cause pruritis (itchiness), and cause a honeycomb type appearance to the skin and cere, upon close examination. Scrapings of the lesions or examination of the crusts in oil under the microscope will show the mites. The treatment of choice is ivermectin based upon careful dose calculation Dosage: 0.2 mg/kg PO, repeat in 10-14 day intervals until signs decrease. Although they do not appear to be very contagious, it is recommended that all birds kept in the same cage also be treated with ivermectin, either orally or topically. As with demodectic mange in dogs, this mite appears to be related to the immune status of the bird, and often the offspring of infested birds will develop Knemidokoptes, as well. Treatment should be repeated at two-week intervals until the bird is clinically normal. Long term infestation may result in permanently deformed beaks, which will require periodic shaping by an avian vet with a grinding tool and emery board. Mites do not live off the bird, so treating the cage is not necessary, but is recommended. Mites that occur in older birds usually indicate some underlying medical problem, such as hepatic lipidosis, diabetes mellitus or even tumors. Mites occasionally occur in other species of birds, rarely cockatiels.

Red mites can occur in budgies and cockatiels. These mites are very contagious between birds of different species, and they suck blood. They are visible to the naked eye as tiny specks of red pepper. Red mites (*Dermanyssus* species) remain off the bird and climb on the host to take a blood meal. They can make the infested birds very nervous and irritated. They sometimes bite people when birds are absent. In addition to treating the birds with red mites, the entire cage and bird area must be thoroughly disinfected to prevent reinfestation. Treatment with oral ivermectin and topical 5% carbaryl, repeated weekly, is usually effective. I saw one case involving a military macaw that had a severe infestation with red mites, and the poor baby bird had multiple feather cysts caused by the damage from the mites.

Feather mites can occur on budgies, and two species have been described to infest budgies. These mites, however, are not commonly encountered. Feather and quill mites can be found (rarely) on cockatiel feathers (usually primary and secondary remiges). Many budgie and 'tiel owners believe that they must use some sort of protection against mites, which can be hung on the outside of the cage, but these are ineffective and potentially dangerous, as the fumes can cause liver damage and perhaps cancer if inhaled for a long period of time. Mite protectors usually have mothballs (paradichlorobenzene) as the active ingredient. If a budgie does not have mites, a mite protector is not necessary to prevent infestation. If a budgie does have an external parasite, it is best to seek the expert advice of an avian veterinarian who can diagnose the exact problem and prescribe the correct medication to treat it at the proper intervals.

Giardia and ascarids (roundworms) frequently occur in budgies and cockatiels. (Don't forget, I practice in Florida, the land of bugs and parasites!) It is important to realize that birds need not be kept in walk-in aviaries (with access to the ground), nor do they have to be housed in sub-standard conditions to harbor these parasites. I have found that ivermectin is not the most effective dewormer for ascarids. Pyrantel pamoate is a better choice. Trichomonads occasionally occur in budgies and cockatiels, as well, and this parasite is most often diagnosed from a swab taken from the oral cavity or crop.

I recommend that avian vets routinely deworm a pet bird at least once or twice, during routine first examination, with a very safe medication, even if fecal parasite examinations are negative. This is because the gastrointestinal tract transit time is so fast in birds that worm eggs do not concentrate in the fecals (as they do in dogs and cats), and it is not only possible, but likely, to miss roundworms on a fecal exam. I have performed countless second opinions on small birds with GI problems that have had negative tests for worms, yet, when I dewormed them, they passed roundworms! If a bird passes roundworms, it should be periodically dewormed for the rest of its life, as the worms may form cysts in the tissues that are released from time to time, resulting in additional worms setting up house-keeping in the intestines.

Dosages:

Pyrantel pamoate 0.1 ml/kg PO For Tapes: praziquantel 5.7 mg/kg IM

Note: fenbendazole can cause fatal hepatopathies, and should not be used in pet birds routinely, also causes feather abnormalities if administered when bird is molting

Giardia, a one-celled protozoal intestinal parasite is often difficult to diagnose in birds. Wet mounts of fresh droppings may sometimes show the protozoa. However, other tests may be necessary to diagnose Giardia. An ELISA (enzyme-linked immunoassay) test on the droppings may be performed. One lab has had great success in diagnosing Giardia (and other parasites) by having the vet place feces in 5% formalin (not the usual 10% used to preserve tissues for histopathology) which prevents damage to the fragile Giardia cysts, and then the droppings are examined with special stains and microscopes.

The lab I recommend is: Parasitology Research Lab, LLC P.O. Box 10/357 Neosho, MO USA 64850-0357 Phone/fax: 417-451-0201 Call to set up an account and get fee schedule.

Treatment of Giardia can be problematic, and most available drugs only kill Giardia in a low percentage of birds. Metronidazole works in about 30-40% of cases. However, it has poor palatability, as well. Ronidazole or dimetronidazole are more effective. Fenbendazole may work well, however, due to potential hepatic toxicosis, this should be avoided. One way to prevent reinfestation is by having a bird use a water bottle in place of the more common water bowl.

Infectious Disorders

While budgies and cockatiels are very hardy little birds, bacterial infections are commonly encountered. Most occur in birds that have a water bowl or cup and not a water bottle. Even the most diligent owner cannot prevent fecal and food contamination of water in an open vessel, which will rapidly grow bacteria. Budgies and 'tiels are very smart little birds and most will rapidly adapt to using a water bottle.

Even though budgies and 'tiels are very small birds, it is possible to run complete blood counts and blood chemistry panels on them. The complete blood count is probably the most important single test that can be run on a bird, as it helps the avian vet determine if a bird has a bacterial, fungal or viral infection, and it shows if a bird is anemic, dehydrated or suffering from a myriad of problems. Bacterial culture of the eye, respiratory tract, choanal slit, crop, cloaca or lesion may help diagnose bacterial problems. Fungal cultures may be helpful. A Gram's stain may help screen birds for potential problems, however, it is only useful as a screening test, and not as a true diagnostic test in most cases. Usually, a healthy bird will have predominately Gram positive cocci and rods. Gram negative rods are not normally found in high percentages in most birds. An abnormal Gram's stain should be followed up by appropriate culturing. Candida may be picked up on Gram's stain, as well, but some foods add brewer's yeast to the diet, which may show up on the Gram's stain. If yeast is causing problems, it may be budding or have pseudohyphae. When in doubt, ask for a fungal culture, which will differentiate between brewer's yeast and potentially pathogenic Candida.

Yeast infections with Candida can occur, especially in birds that don't get enough vitamin A in the diet. Many bacterial and yeast infections in budgies and cockatiels occur as a result of owners allowing birds to eat out of their mouths, or if they allow a bird to have contact with human saliva. Our mouths contain many microbes that can cause disease in birds, and contact with the human mouth should be strictly prohibited.

A controversial disease in budgies is called megabacteria. These large bacteria can be found in the proventriculus (and sometimes the crop or other portions of the GI tract) of both healthy and ill birds. It can be difficult to diagnose in live birds. Some researchers believe that megabacteria are normal inhabitants of the GI tract and others feel that this organism is responsible for causing disease in budgies. This can also occur in other birds, including cockatiels.

The bacteria responsible for causing tuberculosis, Mycobacterium, may cause disease in budgies and 'tiels. One screening test is called an acid-fast stain, and the organism may also be grown on culture, but a special lab and special techniques must be used to culture it. Often, birds with TB will have an elevated white blood cell count.

A primitive bacterium is responsible for causing the disease known as chlamydiosis (also caused psittacosis or parrot fever). This organism may cause respiratory disease in budgies and cockatiels, and is contagious to other birds through infected droppings, and infected secretions. It may also affect the liver and GI tract. Budgies and 'tiels can be carriers of chlamydiosis, and may not show clinical signs. Chlamydiosis is fairly common in budgies and cockatiels, and it should be noted that testing is not always accurate in the live bird. DNA PCR testing is helpful in procuring a diagnosis and the white blood cell count may be mildly elevated, or it may remain normal. Chlamydia is very host-adapted to cockatiels and diagnosis is very problematic in the live bird.

Due to potential legal problems, every cockatiel owner should be advised about the zoonotic potential of chlamydiosis. I give every 'tiel owner a hand-out (purchased from the AAV publications office). If an owner declines testing, be sure to note that in the chart.

AAV Publications office address: Kathy Lyon Publications Coordinator P.O.Box 210732 Bedford, TX USA 76095 PH: 817-428-7900 e-mail: AAVPubs@aol.com

AAV Central Office: Adina Rae Freedman, CAE Executive Director P.O.Box 811720 Boca Raton, FL USA PH: 561-393-8901 e-mail: AAVCtrlofc@aol.com Website: www.aav.org/aav

Another disease that may present with similar clinical signs is mycoplasmosis. Both chlamydia and mycoplasma may be treated with doxycycline or enrofloxacin. Enrofloxacin dosage: 7.5-20 mg/kg q12 hrs. For flock treatment: water-soluble doxycycline is available from Global Pigeon Supply, phone: 912-356-1320.

Budgies are often implicated in outbreaks of polyomavirus infection. This virus can cause budgie fledgling disease. French moult, a slow, debilitating disease of budgies may be caused by polyomavirus or psittacine beak and feather

disease virus (PBFD). A vaccine against polyomavirus is available to protect non-budgerigar psittacines, and a vaccine for budgies is under investigation. Cockatiels may also suffer from polyoma viral infections. Budgies and cockatiels may also be affected by other types of viruses, including Proventricular Dilatation Disease, PDD.

Reproductive Problems

Budgies are determinate layers, meaning that a hen will lay a predetermined number of eggs per cycle, usually four, six or rarely eight. This is in contrast to cockatiels, called indeterminate layers. A cockatiel hen will continue to lay eggs to replace those lost from her clutch. So, if an owner takes the eggs away from a hen as she lays them, she may lay so many eggs (the record in my practice is 27!) that she becomes depleted of her nutrients, which can be life-threatening. However, the budgie will usually cease laying once her clutch is complete, even if the eggs are taken away from her.

This is why so many more cockatiels end up with egg-related problems when compared to budgies.

Hypocalcemia can be treated with vitamin D3 injection, injectable calcium (Calphosan: calcium gluconate 50 mg/ml and calcium lactate 50 mg/ml, IM, 5-10 mg/kg q12 hr PRN. Make sure bird is well-hydrated when giving injectable calcium. I usually dilute 50:50 with sterile saline for IM injections). Neocalglucon in the drinking water can be administered in the drinking water, 1 ml per ounce (30 ml) drinking water.

Male budgies of many colors, excluding some of the pale colors, will develop a blue cere as they mature. The hen will develop a tan or brown cere upon maturity. Some hens will develop brown hypertrophy of the cere, a thickening of the cere that is considered normal, however, for cosmetic reasons, an avian veterinarian can carefully peel off the excessive growth. If the cere color of a mature male budgie changes from blue to brown, this is often an indication of a tumor of the testicle.

Occasionally, a hen may have difficulties in laying an egg. This is termed dystocia, and it may have many causes, including not enough calcium in the diet resulting in a soft-shelled egg, a weak or infected oviduct, malnutrition, a damaged or small pelvis, a malformed egg, poor muscle tone and body condition of the hen or tumors. Supplying the hen with heat and humidity may help her pass the egg, however, dystocia can rapidly become an emergency, requiring immediate veterinary care. Applying mineral oil or water-soluble jelly to the vent is not likely to be effective, unless the egg is clearly visible just inside the vent.

Many egg-bound hens are dehydrated, so the first treatment an avian vet will perform is usually the administration of fluids. Radiographs (x-rays) may be helpful in confirming dystocia. An injection of calcium may help the hen by allowing the oviduct to contract more strongly. An injection of vitamin D helps calcium absorption. If fluids, the vitamin injection and the injectable calcium, in addition to heat and humidity don't facilitate passage of the egg, a prostaglandin gel (Prepodil gel) may be applied inside the vent, as long as the egg can physically pass.

The prostaglandin gel works along the natural pathways, and is a much better drug to use in place of oxytocin, which is the drug that was classically used to cause contractions of the oviduct (and is used in mammals). Extreme care must be taken by any female personnel dealing with this gel, as it can cause serious problems with the female reproductive tract. Occasionally, a hernia may be associated with egg-binding.

Neoplasia

Budgies often suffer from a myriad of tumors as they age. Budgies that develop a limp or weakness of one leg often have a tumor pressing on the sciatic nerve, causing the leg problem. The tumor may be of the kidney, gonad or adrenal gland. Other tumors may occur in almost any organ. Cockatiels can also develop malignancies as they age. Fibromas and fibrosarcomas are the most commonly seen in my practice.

Endocrine Disorders

Hypothyroidism, although not well-described, may occur in budgies. Diabetes mellitus, also quite rare, occurs in budgies, as well. Tumors of the adrenal or pituitary gland have occurred. Cockatiels, especially, fat, female and four, may develop diabetes mellitus. In birds, diabetes is due to an overproduction of glucagon, as opposed to a lack of insulin in mammals.

Gout

Gout is quite common in budgies. It may be a result of kidney disease or it may be primary in origin. If urates are

deposited in the joints, this is called articular gout. This is a very painful condition and treatment is usually unrewarding. Visceral gout, where urates are deposited on the surface of organs, such as the heart and liver, is usually diagnosed at necropsy. Gout also occurs in cockatiels, and is usually secondary to renal disease.

Injuries

Budgies and cockatiels, being the inquisitive little birds that they are, may get underfoot, and may be injured by being stepped on, closed in a door, etc. Fractures of the wing or leg frequently occur, and can be usually simply treated by using a tape splint. Bird bones heal quite rapidly, so splints won't need to be kept on as long as one would for a dog or cat.

Budgies and cockatiels may get a concussion from flying into a window or mirror, or injuries may occur by an encounter with a ceiling fan. This is clinically called "shredded tweet."

Regurgitation

A budgie may regurgitate to a favorite toy, mirror or its favorite person. This is a normal behavior. This must be differentiated from regurgitation resulting from disease. Cockatiels may also regurgitate to a favorite person or toy, but not as commonly as in budgies.

Conclusions

Budgies and cockatiels are wonderful little birds with great ability to mimic speech. They can be loving companions. Veterinary care is important for them, and just because they are small birds, their preventative medical care should not be neglected. Avian veterinarians are able to provide the same quality of care for a budgie as for a macaw. Always offer the budgie and 'tiel owner the same diagnostic plan that you would for the owner of a larger bird. With proper care and diet, the budgie and cockatiel can live a long, healthy life.
